All About Choices

Mr. Cordoba looked at his watch as he and Maria hurried into their house. “It’s 7:25, Maria,” he said. “Grab your books! Your mom can drive you to school on her way to work.”

Mr. Cordoba turned to his wife. “Maria said that Coach Aronov told her that she has to start running for an hour every night,” he said. “She already has too much to do. She practices from 5:00 to 7:00 every morning, then rushes to school, then back to the rink for two more hours, then dinner, then homework. And now he wants her to run for an hour? I tried to talk to her about it, but she just stared out the window.”

“She was quiet yesterday, too,” Mrs. Cordoba said. “By the way, her math teacher called to say that Maria hasn’t been finishing her homework.”

Maria ran down the steps two at a time while putting on her backpack. “Let’s go, Mami!” she said breathlessly.

The morning did not go well. Maria was late for homeroom and had to go to the principal’s office for a pass. She had gotten her math homework done for a change, but she hadn’t touched another book. At lunch, Howard sat next to her.



“Ready for the science test, Maria?” Howard asked in a jaunty tone that told her he must be prepared. She had been so worried about math that she had forgotten about the science test.

Maria hurried to science class and asked Mr. Carlson if she could take the test tomorrow. Mr. Carlson said no. The test was a disaster, and Maria couldn’t put it out of her mind as she ran to catch the school bus at the end of the day. Once home, she collapsed in the easy chair in her room.

“Maria! Where are you?” her mother called. Maria woke up with a start and

looked at her watch. “Coming!” she called back.

Once in the car, Maria said, “Mami, Coach Aronov told me this morning that I have to run for an hour every night. He told me I have to run off my dinner. He said that I don’t look like a skater.”

“He said that you don’t look like a skater?” her mother asked incredulously. Like many skaters, Maria wasn’t very tall, but she was solid and muscular, not wispy thin. Mrs. Cordoba was stunned by the implication of his words.

The practice session was like all the others: rigorous and punctuated by the coach’s outbursts. On the way home, neither Mrs. Cordoba nor Maria spoke. As they got out of the car, Maria said, “I’m going to work on my math while I eat, okay? That’s the only way I can work in an hour of running.” Mrs. Córdoba nodded.

An hour later, Maria announced that she wasn’t going to run after all. “It’s too late, it’s too dark, and I’m too tired,” she said. Mr. and Mrs. Cordoba watched their daughter pull herself up the stairs with the help of the railing. Then Mrs. Cordoba had the opportunity to give her husband the details about Coach Aronov’s comments to Maria. “You must be joking!” Mr. Cordoba exploded. “He said she doesn’t look like a skater? And does he think he looks like a coach?”

The next day at school, Mr. Carlson handed back the graded science tests. On Maria’s test he had written “60%—see me after school today!”

Maria went to see Mr. Carlson that afternoon, and he looked up as she entered the room. “Maria,” he began, “I hope you will think about the choices you are making. I’m not questioning your skating goals, but what about your academic goals? Your next test score needs to be vastly improved.” Maria said she understood and hurried to catch the bus home.

Maria hadn’t been home very long when her mother rushed into the house saying, “Sorry I’m late. Hurry or you’ll be late for practice.”

“That’s okay, Mami,” Maria said. “I called Coach Aronov and told him that this wasn’t working out for me. I quit.”

“Are you sure this is what you want?” her mother asked.

“Yes,” Maria answered. “I have too much to do. I am too tired to do my homework, and I don’t have any time for my friends. Besides, I can still skate for fun. It’s all about choices, and I’ve made mine!”

“I think it’s a wise choice,” Mrs. Cordoba said, giving Maria a big hug.

1. Which of the following sentences from the passage BEST supports the theme?
2. “It’s all about choices, and I’ve made mine!”
3. “You must be joking!” Mr. Cordoba exploded.
4. At lunch, Howard sat next to her. “Ready for the science test, Maria?”
5. “Mami, Coach Aronov told me this morning that I have to run for an hour every night.”
6. What message is the coach sending to Maria?
7. Sports are more important than school.
8. The more you practice, the better you get.
9. Following your coach’s advice is necessary.
10. You need to exercise if you want to look like a skater.
11. If this passage needed a new title, it would be
12. “The Bad Grade.”
13. “Maria’s Dilemma.”
14. “The Coach’s Rules.”
15. “The Very Busy Day.”
16. What lesson does Mr. Carlson want Maria to learn?
17. Always respect your parents.
18. Spending time on hobbies is fun.
19. Good grades come easy to some students.
20. School is just as important as other activities.
21. What is the MOST important lesson Maria learns in “All About Choices”?
22. Always ask adults for advice.
23. Studying hard will always pay off.
24. Managing time wisely is important.
25. Making decisions can be very difficult.
26. Read this sentence from the passage:

**Like many skaters, Maria wasn’t very tall, but she was solid and muscular, not wispy thin.**

Which word has the OPPOSITE meaning of the word *wispy*?

1. energetic
2. flexible
3. strong
4. useful
5. What happens AFTER Maria eats dinner while working on her math, but BEFORE Maria goes to bed?
6. Maria decides not to run.
7. Maria studies her science.
8. Maria explains what her coach told her.
9. Maria tells her mother she is quitting skating.
10. Why does Maria decide to quit skating?
11. Maria’s parents suggested she stop skating.
12. Maria felt upset about her coach’s comment.
13. Maria earned a poor grade on her science test.
14. Maria’s coach was upset because she didn’t run.
15. The author includes the photograph to show that Maria was
16. worried about skating practice.
17. exhausted from her busy schedule.
18. upset because she had failed her test.
19. stressed because she had not studied.
20. Which statement from the passage BEST explains Maria’s feelings about skating?
21. “Besides, I can still skate for fun.”
22. “He said I don’t look like a skater.”
23. “It’s too late, it’s too dark, and I’m too tired,” she said.
24. “I called Coach Aronov and told him that this wasn’t working out for me.”

Answer Key:

1. Correct Answer is A, DOK 2
2. Correct Answer is D, DOK 3
3. Correct Answer is B, DOK 2
4. Correct Answer is D, DOK 2
5. Correct Answer is D, DOK 2
6. Correct Answer is C, DOK 2
7. Correct Answer is A, DOK 1
8. Correct Answer is C, DOK 2
9. Correct Answer is D, DOK 3
10. Correct Answer is A, DOK 2